

January 17, 2007

The Honorable Eileen Cody  
House Health Care and Wellness Committee Chair  
Washington State House of Representatives  
John L O'Brien Building  
Post Office Box 40600  
Olympia, Washington 98504-0600

Dear Representative Cody:

I am writing as chair of the Washington State Board of Health to support House Bill 1098, which is scheduled to be heard before your committee on January 18. This bill would clarify the Secretary of Health's authority to suspend, under special circumstances, restrictions against administering vaccines containing non-trace amount of the preservative thimerosal to pregnant women and children under the age of three.

Currently the Secretary may suspend the restrictions after declaring a "public health emergency." There is no definition in Washington State law for the term public health emergency. House Bill 1098 would allow the Secretary to waive the restrictions during an "outbreak of vaccine-preventable disease." The change more clearly describes the conditions under which there would be a clear public health need to administer vaccines that may contain thimerosal.

Thank you for your efforts to protect pregnant women and children during a disease outbreak.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike Shelton", with a stylized, cursive script.

Mike Shelton  
Acting Chair, Washington State Board of Health

cc: House Care Health Care Committee Members  
Washington State Board of Health Members  
Ms. Christina Hulet, Governor's Executive Policy Office  
Mr. Brian Peyton, Department of Health  
Mr. Craig McLaughlin, Washington State Board of Health